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# Digital Marketing Plan (DMP)

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For: **South Texas College**  
[www.southtexascollege.edu](http://www.southtexascollege.edu)

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**Contents**

- Introduction ..... 4
  - Executive Summary ..... 4
  - Organization & Product ..... 4
  - History ..... 4
- Strategic Plan & Focus..... 5
  - Mission Statement..... 5
  - Overall Goals & Objectives ..... 5
  - Marketing & Product Objectives ..... 5
  - Revenue Models ..... 6
  - Target Market ..... 6
  - Brand Strategy ..... 6
    - Brand Components..... 6
    - Brand Messaging ..... 7
  - Differentiation Points & Positioning..... 9
- Situational Analysis ..... 10
  - SWOT Analysis ..... 10
  - Industry Analysis..... 11
  - Competitor Analysis..... 12
  - Company Brief ..... 13
  - Customer Analysis ..... 13
  - Legal Analysis..... 13
    - Privacy Policies ..... 14
    - Terms of Use ..... 17
- Digital Marketing Strategy & Tactics..... 18
  - Buyer Personas & Customer Roles ..... 18
  - New Media / Viral / Social Media..... 18
  - Mobile..... 19
  - Website..... 19
    - Conversion Goals..... 19

- Landing Pages..... 19
- Home Page ..... 20
- Funnel Navigation ..... 20
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)..... 20
- Pay-Per-Click (PPC) / Paid Advertising ..... 21
- Email Marketing & Customer Messaging ..... 22
- Partner / Affiliate Marketing ..... 22
- Offline Marketing ..... 22
- PR / Communications Plan ..... 22
- Implementation Plan ..... 23
- Financial Data & Projections ..... 24
- Financial Projections ..... 24
- Budget..... 24
- Evaluation, Control & Continuous Improvement ..... 24
  - Measurement & Testing Plan (Analytics) ..... 24
- Resources & References ..... 24
  - Resources..... 24
  - References ..... 25

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# 1: Introduction

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## Executive Summary

*This Digital Marketing Plan is presented to South Texas College whose main revenue is from student enrollment. South Texas College offers an affordable education to the residents of the Rio Grande Valley. It's not an understatement to say that South Texas College's enrollment was impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to suffer. This Digital Marketing plan is outlined to help gear the school into a new era of Digital Marketing and help boost student engagement, pride, and ultimately enrollment. In this plan you'll find specific marketing goals, website adjustments, brand strategy, digital marketing strategies, an implementation plan along with financial data and an expected budget for part of this plan.*

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## Organization & Product

*South Texas College is a higher education institution that offers certificates, professional development, trade training, associates degrees, and bachelor's degrees.*

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## History

*South Texas College was founded in 1993 and started out as a trade school to meet the needs of the area. Now South Texas College offers more than 127 degree and certificate options, including associate degrees in liberal arts, social sciences, math, technology, advanced manufacturing and allied health, along with five baccalaureate degrees.*

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## 2: Strategic Plan & Focus

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### Mission Statement

*South Texas College is a public institution of higher education that provides educational opportunities through excellence in teaching and learning, workforce development, cultural enrichment, community service, and regional and global collaborations.*

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### Overall Goals & Objectives

**Student Success:** We are committed to the personal, academic and career goals of each student.

**Excellence:** We are committed to excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and services.

**Opportunity:** We are committed to providing access and support for students to achieve their academic and career goals.

**Community:** We are committed to equitable results through inclusion, diversity, collaboration, and engagement.

**Integrity:** We are committed to being respectful, professional, honest, accountable, and transparent.

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### Marketing & Product Objectives

- *Increase in Student Enrollment*
  - *Advertising to students through students can create an impactful way of word-of-mouth advertisement. This will help them make the decision to come to South Texas College.*
- *Increase in Student School Pride*
  - *An increase in student school pride will increase student morale and help create an environment that students can be proud of.*
- *Increase in Faculty School Pride*
  - *An increase in Faculty school pride will help boost student morale and help create a sense of common community and school pride with students.*
- *Increase in Student's Educational Value*
  - *Ensuring that students receive the best education for their money is and always has been a key part of South Texas College's culture.*
- *Increased Community Reputation*
  - *Community pride in South Texas College increases overtime by effectively increasing student pride.*

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## Revenue Models

*Being a non-profit organization has its hardships. South Texas College's Revenue is sorely based on enrollment and retention. Finding new ways to innovate our student marketing campaigns can impact and help grow our student body. Cost of attendance for a full time In-District student is \$924.00, Out-of-District is 1,044.00, and Non-Resident tuition is \$2,400.00.*

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## Target Market

*South Texas College provides educational opportunities for a wide range of individuals. The target market focuses on individuals seeking to climb out of poverty and gain a fighting chance at a better life through education. Currently, more than 70% of South Texas College's student base are students who are first-time going to college in their family, excluding dual enrollment. The College's largest ethnicity is Hispanic which stands at 95%. The age range of those attending South Texas College varies widely which creates the opportunity for the College to offer many evening and weekend college courses for students with full-time employment and/or children.*

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## Brand Strategy

*For any company or business, branding is very important. This helps customers see the difference between their company and the competition. By ensuring a brand you guarantee that your company knows who it is and who it is trying to serve. "Your brand is the sum total of your customers' perceptions, notations, and experience, (Sinha, A.)". By solidifying the South Texas College brand, it will help better serve its students and image around the community. As an institution of higher ed, the competition is far from scarce. The fight comes from all sides, starting from the local University to the vocational colleges that serve the certificate students. South Texas College offers certificates, associate degrees, and a few bachelor's degrees. This covers the needs of the surrounding clientele. The job of this branding strategy is to help South Texas College stand apart from its competitors and reach its target base.*

### Brand Components

- By selecting the name, it appears the College selected the most direct manner for customers to know who they are and where they are. South Texas is a region of Texas that includes San Antonio and everything south of it and "College" is what they are. The college's original name was South Texas Community College which it changed to South Texas College in 2004. As the College grew the board of directors felt the STCC name was too long and needed a simpler name the community could identify with.*
- South Texas College's logo is the most recent iteration of its logo. It showcases the community that was removed from the school's name by bringing in the colors green, blue, purple, and orange along with the outlines of little people. The different colors showcase how diverse the college is. Also, the colors play a part in the way people feel about the college. "Several studies indicated that the saturation of a color stimulus has a stronger effect on the emotional response than the hue, (Oberfeld, D., Wilms, L.)". Different colors*

*play an integral part in how the mind reacts to logos. In this case, the fact that green is prominent in two people figures showcases peace while the blue indicates trust, orange showcases friendly and the purple reflects wisdom. These colors represent what the college has in mind with its brand and tries to create an emotional feeling when someone first views the logo. "People saw diversity, they saw generations of students on the shoulders of others rising up in the world. They saw their own educational journey in the logo, (South Texas College)".*

- *South Texas College attempts to own the word "Excellence". In the College's mind it encompasses what the college is. In the minds of community members, I would suggest this is not reciprocated. The community still perceives South Texas College as a community college.*
- *A tagline or phrase is something the company can use in promotional videos or materials as a quick summary of what the business is. South Texas College's tagline is "Experience Exceptional!". Here we have a short and simple tagline that can be used for the brand and speak to the quality of the school along with its instruction. This is a good tagline, but a suggestion for a new tagline would be "Take charge of your future!". This proposed tagline puts the power in the hands of the students. By empowering them they will feel they have control over their lives.*
- *Logo colors and shape are unique to the college and the area. The College's choice for secondary colors, which are dark purple and dark green, are a problem. The use of these colors by the PR Department against a white background creates a look that is bland and boring. Using softer colors rather than darker ones will help the logo "pop" more in all marketing efforts and not drown out the importance of the Colleges' diversity.*

### **Brand Messaging**

- *"Archetypes are a bridge to the world of spirit, whereas instincts connect us with the reality of matter, (Adamski, A.)". Finding the right archetype for South Texas College can help its employees better understand the companies brand voice and help them better represent the college. Archetypes are used to bring a better representation of the company's idea. As per the quiz provided by [www.kayeputnam.com](http://www.kayeputnam.com), the archetype that South Texas College selected is "The Sage". This categorization is spot on considering The Sage is a seeker of knowledge and truth. As true with many institutions of Higher Ed., South Texas College is always seeking to provide its students with the best and up to date education in the nation, always finding new ways to learn and adapt to changing technologies. "As an institution, evolving has been a necessary part of the process with enrollment reaching over 31,000 in 2014, (South Texas College)".*
- *Helping Students across the RGV reach their goals of graduation and a better life through education.*
- *South Texas College was founded as a technical school but has evolved into so much more. Meeting the growing needs of the Rio Grande Valley, South Texas College has become a light at the end of the tunnel for many students.*
- *The promotional plan that South Texas College already has is a good one. However, the method of promoting is an area that should be revisited. By enhancing the methods, you*

*have additional means of keeping track of your marketing materials to better understand who follows you and what they respond to.*

- *Search Engine Marketing*
  - *Google Alerts: By initializing Google Alerts you can know immediately what people search for that is related to your company. This is a free tool and will not cost anything out of pocket.*
  - *Google AdWords: Using Google AdWords allows you to keep track of pay per clicks and search engine optimization campaigns the company runs. This is a great way to determine how you rank online using analytics.*
- *Social Media*
  - *Facebook Ads: Using Facebook ads gives you real-time responses to your online digital advertisements.*
  - *YouTube: Will allow the use of a new form of media promotion not currently in use. This also gives you data on who watched and for how long.*
  - *Instagram: Utilizing Instagram with quick media also gives you instant feedback on how to continue to advertise your company.*
  - *Hootsuite: Hootsuite combines all your social media accounts on one screen allowing you to monitor and view who commented, what they commented and what your engagement is.*
  - *Sproutsocial: As a paid tool, Sproutsocial shows you how well your competitors are doing and how you measure up against them.*
- *Email Marketing*
  - *Mailchimp: South Texas College utilizes online social media but drastically lacks in email marketing. By using Mailchimp you can create customer retention by providing incentives through email all while collecting the free data Mailchimp provides.*

*This plan provides ways to gather analytics through different means while gaining a deeper understanding of your customer base. It is easy to post content and forget about it. However, with all these tools you will be able to see what content is worth creating and focusing more time and money on. Wasted resources are not a good thing because they hinder you from being able to reach more people. Additionally, by creating a successful marketing campaign online and off, you become more visible within the community. Keep in mind that “visibility is viability”. Once the community sees you as a reputable business, they will be more inclined to use your services. This strategy not only takes the analytics of posts into consideration but also provides the College with a cost-effective opportunity of becoming a better institution for the community. Using the free tools that Google and other social media platforms provide will save money that could fund additional community driven projects.*



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## Differentiation Points & Positioning

*Competitive Differentiators are things that set you apart from the competition. In most cases, the biggest competition for South Texas College is The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. They offer more degrees and have a larger campus along with one located in Brownsville. The difference is that South Texas College is a Nonprofit organization while The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is a research school. This means that they aren't able to offer a competitive tuition range against South Texas College. By expanding the bachelor programs, South Texas College can become a bigger threat to The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. If students can attain an associate degree and then stay for a bachelor's degree, it'll increase the college's retention numbers and provide the students with affordable education The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley can't. A big differentiator is a student to instructor ratio between the two institutions. While South Texas College provides a 22:1 student to faculty ratio The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has a much higher one. South Texas College has everything they need to become a powerhouse in the region, the only thing it lacks is a good marketing plan. The branding for the institution is good but the way that it's promoted isn't. By increasing the advertising methods and changing the types of digital media that are produced South Texas College can reach more people and engage better with the community.*

## 3: Situational Analysis

### SWOT Analysis

#### **Strengths**

•Affordability, Program offerings, Faculty and Staff, Equipment and technology, Student support services

#### **Weaknesses**

•Understaffing, Outreach, Internal Processes, Communication, STC Culture

#### **Opportunities**

•Partnerships, Student Placements, Funding, Labor Market Trends, STC Culture

#### **Threats**

•Competing Institutions, Negative Perceptions, Funding, Dual Credit Issues, Labor Market Trends

*This information above showcases the results of the SWOT analysis conducted by José Luis Cano, Institutional Research Analyst.*

*For this study participants stated STC's affordability to be a top strength with the number of programs they offer to be second, the quality Faculty and Staff were a third, fourth was the cutting-edge technology that the college has to offer and fourth was student support was the last one.*

*Understaffing in different departments was the top weakness, followed by a lack of public relations with program specific marketing. A third weakness was the internal processes that the college had in place, followed by communication issues due to oversaturation of information and inconsistent updates. Lastly, a lack of a STC culture in the community was also evident.*

*Five opportunities presented themselves for STC. First, the College has partnerships with our surrounding 4-year universities, school districts, labor industries, governmental entities, and surrounding community colleges. The second opportunity was student placement such as course placements, apprenticeships, and other networking with job placements. Third was school funding with most of the funding coming from the government such as Financial Aid and other government grants. This allowed students the opportunity to complete their education at STC*

*debt free. Fourth on the list of opportunities was labor market trends, which included re-igniting fruitful relationships with our community, creating internal and external STC traditions. The fifth opportunity included enhancing STC culture through visibility of programs at STC.*

*The final area on SWOT analysis is threats. The first threat is competing institutions and universities contending for students and staff attrition. The second threat is negative perceptions, poor perceptions towards the school developed due to a devaluation of higher education and an image of violence in the region. Funding came up as the third threat because of the reduction of funding from the state and federal level. Fourth on the list was issues with dual credit programs that negatively impact STC's enrollment. As high school students gain an associate's education they do not see the need to enroll as a traditional student after high school graduation. Fifth and last the threat list is labor market trends. This comes up as a threat because of industries that hire personnel with minimal credentials and a boom in the local economy.*

*By completing this STC was able to create a comprehensive strategic plan that was implemented in 2019 and will run through to 2025. The core values of this place include student success, excellence, opportunity, community and integrity. Some goals that are laid out in this plan are lead community engagement, "South Texas College is the catalyst for engaging and strengthening the communities through diverse efforts, (South Texas College Strategic Plan, Pg. 7)". To promote academic integrity and excellence, "South Texas College is dedicated to creating a dynamic and innovative educational environment base on excellence, academic honesty, rigor, and continuous improvement, (South Texas College Strategic Plan, Pg. 8)". Another is to create educational opportunities for students, "South Texas College is committed to providing accessible and inclusive educational opportunities that enable a seamless transfer to advanced degrees or align with emerging workforce needs, (South Texas College Strategic Plan, Pg. 9)". The second to the last is to foster student success, "South Texas College is devoted to providing students with accessible pathways and effective support structures that promote persistence, educational attainment, academic achievement, personal and professional growth, (South Texas College Strategic Plan, Pg. 10)". The last one is to cultivate institutional excellence, "South Texas College creates a culture of excellence through integrity, collaboration, transparency, accountability, fiscal responsibility, and leveraging technology, (South Texas College Strategic Plan, Pg. 11)".*

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## **Industry Analysis**

*As per Oxford College of Marketing "A PESTEL analysis is an acronym for a tool used to identify the macro (external) forces facing an organization". Breaking down South Texas College's PESTEL analysis I found some more structure for the SWOT analysis. The P in PESTEL stands for Political Factors, and for South Texas College this means both local, state and federal government. Since STC's funding comes from Financial aid they need to abide by Federal laws, yet the College is a*

*nonprofit organization, so they rely heavily on funding from the State of Texas as well. On the level of city, McAllen votes on bonds for buildings and taxpayer money goes towards the school. So, all these factors can benefit and hurt the school in the long run with funding cuts or bonds being passed for new buildings. The E in PESTEL is economic, and for South Texas College this is a big matter. In our area of the Rio Grande Valley, our Hispanic culture places providing for your family through employment above a higher education. Many of our students seek jobs north of the Rio Grande Valley that do not require a higher education, such as employment at an oil rig company. The College sees a drop in enrollment if such jobs are available. However, once the rigs get shut down, the employees move back to the Valley and begin to seek additional education. These factors in job availability and the economy cause a fluctuation in enrollment. "Community colleges typically see upticks in enrollment during recessions and drops in enrollment during times of recovery, which make leadership's job all the more challenging, (Eddy, P. 2019)". Social Trends is the S in PESTEL. For South Texas College many young students do not see a reason to get a higher education when they can pursue a career on YouTube or TikTok. Many young students do not see a reason to jump at the opportunity for a higher education. The T in PESTEL stands for Technological Factors. South Texas College tries it's best to stay on the cusp of technology when it comes to education and training. This is not one of their weaknesses because they focus a good part of their budget to staying viable in the ever-changing environment. "Other examples cited include the need for innovation in developmental education, an increased use of technology to support learning, and new funding models, (Eddy, P. 2019)". South Texas College does not lack in this. Environmental Factors take the place of the second E in PESTEL. Here the College does not seem to be affected by it. South Texas does not see many hurricanes and are not smothered by smog found in larger cities. The last letter L stands for Legal factors. South Texas College has their own lawyers to stay on top of the current and past laws that the state of Texas passes. Here is where we see funding cut or new laws on curriculum placed by the state. "A PESTEL analysis helps an organization identify the external forces that could impact their market and analyze how they could directly impact their business, (Oxford College of Marketing)".*

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## **Competitor Analysis**

*The biggest competition is The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. This University's website is as easy to maneuver as its competitor. Its long load times could be a hindrance when it comes to information gathering for students. This university is only a few miles north of South Texas College and has an advantage of being established many years before South Texas College. This advantage has allowed it to grow its brand in the Rio Grande Valley. Before the university's rebranding and consolidation of The University of Texas at Brownsville, prior to being UTRGV, it was the University of Texas-Pan American which was established in 1927. Even with the new branding, which was completed in 2015, the university has maintained its reputation within the community. This is one of STC's biggest threats.*

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## Company Brief

*As of December 2020, South Texas College is being affected by low student enrollment. The loss of students who were uncomfortable with online learning in both Spring and Fall 2020 could have been mitigated by access to more online resources and help available to students. Having a 24-hour computer lab would could have been a start to help students who work and don't have the technology available to do their work. Additionally, it would have calmed the nerves of those students who would rather wait until the COVID-19 pandemic is over and traditional in-person classes return.*

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## Customer Analysis

*South Texas College's student body is made up of primarily Hispanic/Latino students who make up 94.2% of the overall population. When it comes to male/female students, female students have a 55.6% lead over male students who are at 44.4%. The College Factual indicates there is a 36.4% lead of students under the age of 18. This group is primarily dual enrollment students. The percentage lowers in the higher age group.*

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## Legal Analysis

*Some legal issues that the college would be open to are:*

**Law suits:** *The college is not immune to lawsuits which can come from all sides, including students, faculty, staff and community members. The way to mitigate these or avoid them is by having clauses on student registration forms or syllabi, faculty contracts, staff contracts and signed waivers for community members participating in any on campus event.*

**Intellectual property:** *Ensuring that professors know the bounds of intellectual property and how to properly use "Fair Use". Specifically, they should be informed the one factor within fair use which is purpose and character of the use. "Purposes that favor fair use include education, scholarship, research and news reporting, as well as criticism and commentary more generally, (University of Minnesota)".*

**Defamation Cases:** *The College could be protected from case stemming from a blog that allows student bloggers to write about their experiences. The college can be protected from a defamation case due to Section 230 of the CDA (Communications Decency Act). "Section 230 says that "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider" (47 U.S.C. § 230), (Electronic Frontier Foundation)".*

## Privacy Policies

### *Information Collected*

*The data collected on the South Texas College Website is used in aggregate by IT custodians to tune the College's Web site for its efficiency and are not ordinarily associated with specific individuals. Raw data from the Web Servers logs are only shared with the custodian of each College Web site. Summary Reports produced from the logs help Colleges' Web publishers determine what College Web browsers and pages are most popular. For example, if the aggregate reports show that a particular College Web page is very popular or is used more by freshman than by seniors, publishers might use this information to customize the content of that page and make it easier to find.*

- Internet addresses (IP address) of computer being used*
- Web Pages requested*
- Referring Web Page*
- Browser Used*
- Date and Time*
- UIN (unique person identifier for EID-based services only)*

### **Cookies**

*Cookies are small pieces of data stored by the College Web browser. Cookies are often used to remember information about preferences and pages a person has visited. For example, when a person visits some sites on the College Website they might see a "Welcome Back" message. The first time a person visited a site, a cookie was probably set on their computer; when they return, the cookie is read again. A person can configure their web browser to refuse to accept cookies, to disable cookies, and to remove cookies from their hard drive as needed. College Web servers use cookies in the centralized authentication system called College EID. The College uses these cookies so that users will not have to repeatedly enter usernames and passwords when they go to different parts of the College's Website. Normally, a person is required to enter a College EID when they request data about themselves or to ensure that they are a member of the College community. For example, students who want to check their admission status or staff members who complete time sheets must enter their College EID so the system knows who is requesting the data. This login process uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) so the username and password are encrypted between the Web browser and our Web server. Some Web Servers may also use cookies*

*to retain user preference information. It is against College policy to share this information with external third parties.*

### **Web Forms**

*The information that we receive through web forms is not sold or traded with any third-party. However, that data is stored internally and with trusted third parties for processing by college staff. The data is retained for as long as it is reasonably needed to fulfill its purpose.*

### **Third-party Links**

*Some pages within the southtexascollege.edu domain may contain content that is served from external third parties. For example, a southtexascollege.edu web site might include a graphic logo or a script from a third party. Specifically, the following code within a southtexascollege.edu page would represent an example of third-party content:*

```
http://www.other-org.com/logo.gif" alt="Sample" />
```

*In this example, logo.gif would be third party content served from a web server outside the southtexascollege.edu domain (www.other-org.com in this case). Third party content in southtexascollege.edu is not limited to graphics, but this is the most frequent use. The College does not transmit any information to these third parties as part of such requests. However, when a person visits southtexascollege.edu webpage that contains third party content, information, such as their IP address, date, browser, and requested page, is transmitted from your computer to that third party.*

### **Children under age of 13**

*The Children's Online Privacy Protection Program took effect on April 21, 2000 and pertains to websites directed towards children under 13 years of age. The website for South Texas College is not directed towards children under 13 and does not knowingly collect personally identifiable information from children under the age of 13. In the event that the college learns that it has collected any personally identifiable information from a child under the age of 13 without verification of parental consent, it will delete that information. If you are a parent or guardian and you believe that your child under age 13 may have provided personally identifiable information through a college site, please contact [privacy@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:privacy@southtexascollege.edu).*

***Student application/Employee application information***

*The College obtains personal information when a person fills out and submits an application to attend or work at the College. This includes any additional information the person submits to the College before or after they submit an application. Persons may also provide the College personal information when they apply for an EID from the College or seek financial aid or visit certain parts of the College Website or make use of College Health Services or similar student or employee services.*

***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

*Except for educational records governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") or information made confidential by other law, all information provided to and collected from the College Website, including the summary server log information, emails sent to the College Web, and information collected from College Web-based forms, along with any other form or type of document or other instrument containing personal information, may be subject to the Texas Public Information Act. Such information may also, in the legal context, be subject to discovery requests or other legal demand that personal data or information be released and made public. The same is true for any personal information obtained by the College through other means such as written submission or communications with previous schools or employers. The College does, upon explicit request of users, share information with other parties and gather information from other private data providers. For example, the College receives test scores from testing agencies and will send transcripts to other schools. This is done only at the request of users. As well as circulating application and related materials to the appropriate staff at the College and its various departments, the College will share personal information for the above purposes as relevant and necessary with:*

- School/college or training organizations;*
- Examination boards or testing services;*
- In the case of international applicants, the appropriate state and federal agencies;*
- Immigration authorities in order to act as a person's sponsor for visa purposes;*
- Governmental bodies, including local authorities; the Teachers' Retirement System; STC Workers Compensation; and other agencies or private actors, such as health care providers, that circumstances require be privy to certain personal information*
- Other Higher Education organizations, in order to assist with tracking and research into access to Higher Education; and*



- *Companies or organizations providing specific services to, or on behalf of, the College and/or one or more of its component colleges, schools, department or programs.*

*Unless specifically required under public information requests filed under the Texas Public Information Act or otherwise compelled by lawful means, or as a party to a legal action, it is against College policy to release confidential information gathered through the College Web, such as pages visited, or personalized preferences. For example, the Colleges' portal, Jagnet, enables users to customize the content they see on their personal page. This information cannot be shared with external third parties, unless required by law. Consistent with FERPA and other applicable privacy law, the College does not release personal student information, other than public directory information, to other parties unless the College receives explicit written consent, is required to do so by law, or for other legitimate ends of the College. College students can read more about directory information in the Colleges' General Information page. Examples of directory information include first and last name, address, and date of birth. Enrolled students can restrict release of their directory information by contacting the Office of the Registrar.*

### **Terms of Use**

*South Texas College (STC) values and respects your privacy and is committed to the responsible use of sensitive information collected from and about its students, faculty, staff, business partners and others who provide such information to the college. This commitment is in accordance with both state and federal regulations concerning the use of sensitive information.*

## 4: Digital Marketing Strategy & Tactics

### Buyer Personas & Customer Roles

*“Psychographic information might be your buyer's habits, hobbies, spending habits and values, (Meredith, A.)”. The reasons a person would pursue higher education at South Texas College would be mostly financial and to expand their career options. The psychographic information would be one of need and security for one’s current or future family. The demographics of a community college are wide. From high school graduates to middle-aged adults seeking employment advancements. The demographics for higher education are very broad, more so for community colleges. Most of the individuals who come to South Texas College are low-income individuals looking for a better job. By offering such an affordable education, South Texas College allows the community the opportunity to climb out of poverty. “The median undergraduate tuition at South Texas College is \$2,100, which is \$-10,790 less than the national average for Baccalaureate/Associates Colleges (\$12,890), (DataUSA)”. The main thing that South Texas College promotes is an affordable education. With the competition being fierce in the area, South Texas College needs to boast on its accreditation and affordability. “In 2017 South Texas College had an average net price - the price paid after factoring in grants and loans - of \$1,825, (DataUSA)”. While a Baccalaureate Degree at South Texas College can yield a cost of \$14,686, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has a full degree average net price of \$30,705. By offering all the different options in our area, South Texas College has become a powerhouse of affordability and advanced educational opportunities.*

### New Media / Viral / Social Media

**Build Brand Ambassadors:** *South Texas College is a relatively large community college that covers a wider range of areas in Texas. Many students have come through our doors by way of our large Dual Enrollment program. We could offer student discounts to those who would qualify for our ambassador program. By having students share our website it will increase our reputation with students of their age levels and in turn increase our online engagement, allowing for more website hits and conversions. Students are the best ambassadors because they not only provide the college with a younger voice they are also more reputable to other students than those who are in charge.*

**Customer Content Creation:** *Creating a hashtag on Instagram and Facebook that can be used to promote a student’s point of view at school activities or student life, we can create a movement that will in turn create free advertisement. If you offer free things at school such as increased library printing, or a free lunch at our school cafeterias, you can offer the student something and make a competition out of it at the same time, which in turn increases interest.*

***Student Driven Surveys:** Creating a student body that is in charge of interviewing other students to see what made them choose South Texas College and pinpoint interesting and emotionally captivating stories for online publication.*

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## **Mobile**

*Smartphone use has increased exponentially in the last 10 years. The use of SMS marketing has also increased, with businesses sending out notifications such as discounts or promotions through SMS retain those attracted to those notifications and will not likely unsubscribe. As a community college we would have to seek a different approach to SMS marketing. By using it as a reminder, or notification system that alerts students that registration for classes or financial aid is open they can be reminded that they need to register. If a student has not registered in the weeks after the initial SMS, you can send out reminders to those students who have yet to register or those who have holds that need to be addressed before they can register.*

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## **Website**

*Designing an effective website is not an easy task. We build a whole new layout for our current website that will help bring in more potential students with engaging content and simple means of information gathering such as a request info right on the front page. We can fix broken links, broken pages, and remove duplicate content problems which will help the websites over all search engine optimization. With some tweaks to the website architecture it can be made more attractive to students and engage them better.*

### **Conversion Goals**

*The goal of the website is to convert interested students into enrolled students. This takes a great deal of convincing through new and interesting means. By being creative with the content provided on our homepage we can give potential students others' experience and why they chose our institution.*

### **Landing Pages**

*Creating a beautiful and clean landing page with eye capturing content will help engage the student's interest and provide a better platform for videos and photos to help cultivate a user driven experience.*

## Home Page

*The South Texas College Website has gone through many iterations through the years. At first glance your eyes are caught with big pictures that seem captivating but lack a certain sense of creativity. The colors purple, green and white boarder the website all while the top is lined with a harsh orange boarder with yellow lettering with COVID updates from the college. The website featured tabs stand out because of the purple color while the white colors help make it pop. All while on the very top with the green banner and white letters lie the links that are most frequented by faculty and staff. Under the big picture marquee is an eye-catching image of a jaguar while on top white bordered buttons with words such as get started and register. The breakdown of the website is bland, while the only other colors are represented in the logo and big images, they're still outlined with the solid colors of green and purple all which are not captivating or capturing to future or potential students.*

## Funnel Navigation

*For a website visitor to become a student they would have had to be attracted to the website to begin with. To be interested in information they would need to be attracted by some form of media or interesting quality the College has. Then once there is interest the student would need to just simply scroll down and submit a request for additional information, this short form would need an email address, name, area of interest, and semester of interest. From there even if the potential student did not enroll, we could entice them further with either discounts on tuition or books. This will also help us build an email list for our email marketing campaigns.*

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## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

*SEO is a powerful tool for websites it helps them be more searchable. "According to HubSpot, 75% of searchers never go past the first page of search results - this is why it is so essential to rank on the first page of Google, (Malya, S.)". Some of the best practices to keep up your SEO in 2020 are aligning your content with search intent, writing compelling title tags and meta description, optimizing your images, optimizing your page speed, using internal linking, improving the user experience on your website, including keywords in your URL, focusing on getting more authoritative backlinks and publishing long-form content.*

### ***Ensuring our website is optimized for local search***

*Optimizing for Local Search is not as simple as it might sound. Plenty of research comes into the fold and then we have optimization. A few things that need to be taken into consideration according to Smith, K. (2020), are optimizing for Google My Business, improving your internal linking structure, optimizing URLs, title tags, headers, meta description and content, adding location pages to your website, creating local content, ensuring your website is mobile-friendly,*

*ensuring that any information is correct ( name, address, and phone number are consistent online), optimizing online directories and citations, getting in bound links with relevance and authority, and engaging on social media and adding posts to Google My Business. By ensuring these things are used as a checklist or best practices list you can optimize for Local Search.*

### **Google**

*South Texas College has a great presence on Google, but it lacks with other websites. Making sure your business is optimized with Google My Business can help ensure that you are getting the most for your organization. “Google My Business has become the crème de la crème of local search – since Google understandably feels most comfortable sharing content it can support and verify, Google My Business is their tool to help your business meet Google’s needs, (Smith, K.)”. Ensuring your information is right on Google can help bring in a great amount of visibility for your business. It is without a doubt that Google is king of search engine right now so it would be wise to ensure South Texas College’s information is up to date and accurate.*

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### **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) / Paid Advertising**

*Creating PPC campaigns with bloggers and certain websites of our choice, we can optimize our website with those keywords and do link building through other websites to increase traffic. Some specific websites are those that help students research colleges and help them match up with the schools of their dreams. By adding ourselves to websites link in these with articles, blogs, or even paid banner advertisements we can insert South Texas College as a possible choice for potential students. When putting southtexascollege.edu to the test I found several things that need to be addressed with the website. By fixing these minor things the school will be able to optimize their search engine optimization, thus bringing in more potential students.*

**Google AdWords:** *Using Google AdWords allows us to keep track of pay per clicks and search engine optimization campaigns the company runs. This is a great way to see how you rank up online using analytics.*

**Google Analytics:** *Google Analytics allows us to measure our advertising ROI and track our flash, video and social networking sites and measure how our PPC and other advertisements are helping people reach our website.*

*Keywords and Cost Breakdown:*

*college rgv*

*community college*

*Ged Adult Courses rgv*

*Affordable college rgv*

*\$29 daily average - \$88222 monthly max with estimated 370-540 ad clicks each month*

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## **Email Marketing & Customer Messaging**

*Mailchimp: South Texas College not only utilizes online social media means it drastically lacks in email marketing. By using Mailchimp you can create customer retention by providing incentives through email all while collecting the free data Mailchimp provides. The message we could get out to students is on program fairs that are going to happen or facts on STC's school rankings against its competitors. Gathering email addresses from our dual credit program can help get ahead in sending emails out to students. Another way you can effectively gather information is by having contests via social media, having potential students enter their information on a simple form for a chance to win a gift card or other goods can help the school gather the necessary emails of potential students. On rate of sending out emails so we won't be spamming the potential student we can send an email twice a week with different information, one can be a weekly newsletter and the other could be more promotional geared towards the age group intended.*

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## **Partner / Affiliate Marketing**

*Finding partners or affiliates to help promote the school is a tough one. The Public Relations Department would need to create a way to vet students to see who would be best to promote the school on their social networking websites. One way we can attract student affiliates is by offering up tuition discounts for website conversions and social media interactions. Student employees that can be used are the student workers or work studies. These students already are employed with the school and are students themselves. By having them create content from a student's perception it can help give the school a younger voice and giving the students a platform to voice out their positive thoughts of the college. An additional way we could find partners are by creating student testimonials of our success stories. Creating quick easily accessible videos that are engaging and full of emotion can help bring in potential students with similar backstories.*

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## **Offline Marketing**

*Creating captivating billboards and traditional marketing offline would help our school tremendously. Having local newspapers and television stations cover stories of students who overcome hardships can help boost the community's perception and build a better relationship with them. The creation of t-shirts, baseball caps, and jackets that can be purchased in local stores such as Walmart and Walgreens can help give an avenue to students to showcase their school pride.*

## PR / Communications Plan

*Our PR Plan would consist of purely community-based leads and promotions. Sending information out through local news groups, tv stations, radio stations, and newspapers is a good way of targeting the community we serve. Creating a student run news organization would allow for creative and willing students to blog about the college experience at South Texas College. Social media is a big way of targeting certain age groups with content that is created towards reaching them. Our website is good, by tying in the student blog with the school we can ensure they're linked and give potential students a way of contacting us or an accessible way of asking for more information on our college. As per the schedule, we would be pushing content all year. Student driven content would be used throughout the semesters and more school created content geared towards registration would be months before the expected semester start. By outlining a weekly content distribution plan, you can ensure that the college is being seen as lively and not forgotten.*

# 5: Implementation Plan

## Marketing Campaigns & Programs

**Community Outreach Campaign:** *Creating free summer camps and workshops for the community can boost the community's perception of the College. Creation of music festivals, art festivals and STEM festivals can bring community members onto campus to see what resources we have to offer. This campaign would have to be done in the Summer to help boost student enrollment for the Fall.*

*Goal: Bring individuals on campus to see our facilities and equipment.*

*Objective: Strengthen community bond and create a better relationship. We can take polls with SWAG incentives while having events around the RGV to see how the community really perceives us. This will allow us good data to help break down our shortcomings and improve them.*

**Student Registration Outreach Digital Campaign with PPC:** *Pushing Digital Content on student related social media websites can remind students that registration is around the corner. Placing advertisements on Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok can ensure that the students are seeing our specific content cultivated towards them. The rollout for this campaign would be in mid-Spring semester, March – August. Finding certain influencers on social media or blogs that are affiliated with the school can help drive people to our landing page using pay per click advertising.*

*Goal: Increase online presence while creating relationships with individuals who are credible to students.*

*Objective: Broaden our digital footprint on new social media platforms along with utilizing influencers to give credibility to younger individuals about our school. By monitoring influencer data through social media monitoring websites, we can be sure our investments are not wasted.*

**Student Generated Content Campaign:** *Pushing Student Generated content through our website and social media outlets can show students a different perspective rather than just ours. Showcasing a student’s voice online is very effective, as much as word of mouth advertisement is effective. This would need to be done all year to remind students that South Texas College is not good just once a year but year-round. Having student take-overs of our social media platforms can allow for students to enjoy a different online voice.*

*Goal: Create a new perspective where students don’t see us as a plain college.*

*Objective: Have younger students take over our social media platforms while keeping their content in line with the school values. These things can easily be measured because every social media platform lays out the analytics for you and helps you see which posts were more engaging, as well as the demographics of that audience.*

## 6: Financial Data & Projections

### Financial Projections

	Fall	Spring	Summer	ROI
Ambassador Content	50	50	50	
Pay Per Click Cost	\$2	\$2	\$2	
Investment	\$100	\$100	\$100	
Traditional Student Registration per student \$924.00	\$46,200	\$46,200	\$46,200	\$137,700
Out-of-District Student Reg. per student \$1,044.00	\$52,200	\$52,200	\$52,200	156,300
Non-Resident Student Reg. per student \$2,400	120,000	\$120,200	\$120,200	\$359,700
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$653,700</b>

Google Adwords Chosen	College RGV	ged adult courses rgv	affordable college rgv	community college
Daily Average Cost	\$29			
Monthly Max	\$882			
Clicks Each Month	37-540			



## Budget

*The budget for a proposed Student Ambassador plan would be \$300 dollars per Ambassador per year. For a fiscal year starting in September and running through August a budget of \$3,000 would have to be allocated to pay 10 different brand ambassadors for the College.*

*For Google Adwords a budget of \$29 daily average with a monthly max of \$822 monthly max will be needed. Google Adwords bring in an estimated 37-540 clicks per month.*

# 7: Evaluation, Control & Continuous Improvement

## Measurement & Testing Plan (Analytics)

*Metrics that would be tracked for the Ambassador program would be referrals, social, clicks, cost-per-click, and paid search. Using Google Analytics, we can set all these different windows of analytics into one platform to track where website visitors came from and when. To test them we would track and see which content has a better interaction rate going through our website and communicate that to our Ambassadors in charge of content creation. We would test the results against those of our personal content and gauge whether or not a certain ambassador is doing their jobs. "Without continuously monitoring your advertising metrics, you cannot determine what ads to pause or modify, reallocate spending, etc., (Muhammad, F.)". By doing this we are hoping to increase website traffic and school interest, effectively increasing our reputation with potential students.*

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## 8: Resources & References

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### Resources

<https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/south-texas-college/student-life/diversity/>

<https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/#/>

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